**Joint Statement on Deepening**

**The Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership**

**Between the People’s Republic of China and**

**The Republic of Sierra Leone**

At the invitation of H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China, H.E. Julius Maada Bio, President and head of state of the Republic of Sierra Leone, paid a state visit to China from February 27 to March 2, 2024.

During the visit, President Xi Jinping and President Bio held talks in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. The two presidents had an in-depth exchange of views on China-Sierra Leone relations, China-Africa relations and international and regional issues of shared interest, and reached extensive and important common understandings.

H.E. Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, and H.E. Zhao Leji, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China, held separate meetings with President Bio.

1. The two sides agreed that since the establishment of diplomatic relations more than 50 years ago, China and Sierra Leone have deepened their traditional friendship, continuously enhanced political mutual trust, achieved fruitful results in practical cooperation and coordinated closely in international affairs. Such a relationship has greatly benefited both countries and peoples, and set a fine example of a new type of international relations.

The two sides spoke highly of the new progress made in China-Sierra Leone relations since President Bio’s state visit to China in 2018.In particular, the two sides recalled the spirit of friendship and solidarity demonstrated in the fight against COVID-19, during which the people of China and Sierra Leone supported each other and fought the pandemic side by side.

1. The two sides concurred that China-Sierra Leone relations have gained further strategic significance in the face of complex challenges in the world. To further promote the development of China-Sierra Leone relations and expand cooperation in various fields, the two leaders have decided to deepen the China-Sierra Leone comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind.
2. The two sides reiterated their firm support for each other in independently choosing a development path that suits their national realities, and will further strengthen exchanges and mutual learning on governance. Sierra Leone highly commends that under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese people have made great progress in realizing the transformation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through Chinese modernization, and believes that the Chinese path to modernization offers options and solutions to fellow developing countries seeking independent development.

The Chinese side believes that Sierra Leone, under the leadership of President Bio, will make considerable progress toward the implementation of the objectives set out in the Medium-Term National Development Plan for 2024-2030, and score new achievements in national development.

1. The two sides underscored the need for mutual support on issues of their respective core interests, which is a core tenet of China-Sierra Leone relations. The Chinese side reaffirmed its firm support for Sierra Leone in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, security and developing interests, and expressed firm opposition to any foreign interference in the internal affairs of Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonean side reiterated its firm commitment to the one-China principle, recognizing that the government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s territory. The Sierra Leonean side firmly opposes any form of“Taiwan independence”or external interference in the internal affairs of China, reaffirms that it will not develop any form of official exchanges with Taiwan and will support all efforts made by the Chinese government to achieve national reunification. Sierra Leone firmly supports China’s position on issues related to Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Xizang.
2. The two sides agreed to further leverage the guiding role of head-of-state diplomacy, and increase exchanges and cooperation at all levels and departments including central and local governments, legislative bodies and political parties.
3. The two sides agreed to further deepen high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. China commended Sierra Leone for joining and actively participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) since 2018. Sierra Leone highly commended the BRI’s positive role in advancing economic development and people’s livelihood in partner countries since its inception over 10 years ago. The two sides have signed the Cooperation Plan on Jointly Promoting the BRI. Guided by the Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit, the two sides will follow the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, adhere to the philosophy of open, green and clean cooperation, and make the cooperation high-standard, people-centered and sustainable. The two sides will further synergize development strategies, promote cooperation in various fields based on their respective comparative advantages and development needs, and strive for more practical outcomes.
4. China commends Sierra Leone’s accession to the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and has added Sierra Leone onto the list of beneficiary countries of the GDI project pool. Sierra Leone will strengthen collaboration with China to promote the implementation of the GDI, the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) at bilateral and multilateral levels.
5. The two sides agreed to enhance trade and investment cooperation. The Chinese side will invite Sierra Leone to continue to participate in the China International Import Expo and actively explore the possibility of providing market access to more Sierra Leonean products. The Chinese side will encourage more Chinese businesses to invest in Sierra Leone, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in areas of agriculture, mining, fishery, vocational education and infrastructure building, support the industrialization of Sierra Leone, and facilitate Sierra Leone’s investment promotion activities in China. Sierra Leone will further improve the business environment and create conducive conditions for Chinese businesses operating in Sierra Leone.
6. The two sides applauded the cooperation results between the two countries in culture, tourism, education, youth, think tanks, media, sport, public health, and epidemic prevention and control, and agreed to further promote people-to-people exchanges, and deepen and consolidate the foundation of friendship between the two countries and peoples. The two sides will promote exchanges among academia and media. The Chinese side will strengthen cooperation with Sierra Leone in human resource development and continue to dispatch medical teams to Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonean side expressed gratitude for China’s long-standing support for Sierra Leone’s health sector, especially during Ebola and COVID-19.
7. The two sides will further strengthen exchanges and cooperation on peace and security, increase high-level exchanges between the military and police forces, and strengthen cooperation in areas of personnel training, equipment and technology, prevention of terrorist attacks, joint exercises and training, and combating transnational crimes.
8. The two sides agreed to uphold the principle of equality among all countries regardless of size, oppose hegemonism and power politics, and work to build an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. As developing countries, China and Sierra Leone share extensive common interests and similar positions on international affairs, and will support each other in this regard. The two sides agreed to safeguard the U.N.-centered international system, the international order underpinned by international law, and basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter, advance unity and cooperation of the international community, adhere to true multilateralism, and build a community with a shared future for mankind. The two sides advocate humanity’s common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy and freedom, and oppose interference in the internal affairs of other countries on the pretext of “democracy”and “human rights”.China congratulated Sierra Leone again on its election as non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council 2024-2025, and expressed its readiness to strengthen cooperation with Sierra Leone and safeguard the common interests of developing countries.
9. The two sides reiterated their support for the authority of the U.N., and agreed that reform of the U.N. Security Council needs to support developing countries including Africa in playing a bigger role, increase their representation and voice in the Security Council and redress the historical injustices done to Africa. The Chinese side spoke highly of Sierra Leone’s important role as chair of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the UNSC reforms (C-10) and expressed its readiness to enhance coordination and cooperation with Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonean side reiterated the African Common Position as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration as the only viable option to address the historical injustices done to Africa.
10. The two sides spoke highly of the important role of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in advancing the China-Africa comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership, and agreed to step up consultations and coordination on FOCAC affairs and jointly deliver on practical cooperation in all areas under the framework of the Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024).To this end, they looked forward to a new session of FOCAC to add strong impetus to the sustainable development of China-Africa relations.

14. The two sides recognized that during President Bio’s visit to China, China and Sierra Leone reached important and extensive common understandings, signed a series of cooperation agreements and achieved great success. After more than 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, this visit unveiled a new era for the consolidation of bilateral relations and diversification of practical cooperation, which is of great significance to the deepening of the China-Sierra Leone comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

15. President Bio expressed his sincere appreciation to President Xi Jinping and the Chinese government and people for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation.